

# **Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education**

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***Presented by***

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**STAMATS**

*Promises kept.*

# Overview

- KCPE partnered with Stamats, a higher education marketing and consulting company, to conduct a research study among Kentucky residents who had attended college but did not complete a bachelor's degree
- Primary goals:
  - Determine the type of individual most likely to complete a bachelor's degree
  - Identify compelling communication messages and strategies



# Method

- Stamats conducted a randomly sampled telephone survey (drawn from the Council's comprehensive database) in May and June of 2007
  - Includes individuals with accumulated credits ranging from less than 30 to 90 or more
- A total of 1,610 surveys were conducted throughout Kentucky, stratified into four regions—Eastern, Western, Central, and Urban
  - The sampling error is  $\pm 2.4\%$  at the 95% confidence level for the entire sample and  $\pm 4.9\%$  for the individual regions
- Note that response rate was slightly lower than typical for a telephone survey—completing a survey about “education needs for Kentucky colleges and universities”



# Questioning

- The survey instrument, designed in collaboration with KCPE, explored the following topics:
  - Reasons for initial stop-/drop-out from college
  - Factors prohibiting/impeding obtainment of a bachelor's degree
  - Motivations for students to re-enroll
  - Potential college services that would increase the likelihood of re-enrollment
  - Awareness of current resources available to adult students
  - Overall likelihood of re-enrollment
  - Majors/programs of most interest to respondents
  - Class formats of most interest to respondents



# Interest in Returning to College

- Results of the study suggest that there is a viable returning-to-college adult student market, but they will need convincing (and it will take time)
  - Among the sample, 23% indicated they were “very likely” to re-enroll in the future—many noting it would likely be two to three years before they made the move
    - Another 27% said they are “somewhat likely” to re-enroll within this time frame



# Pockets of Interest

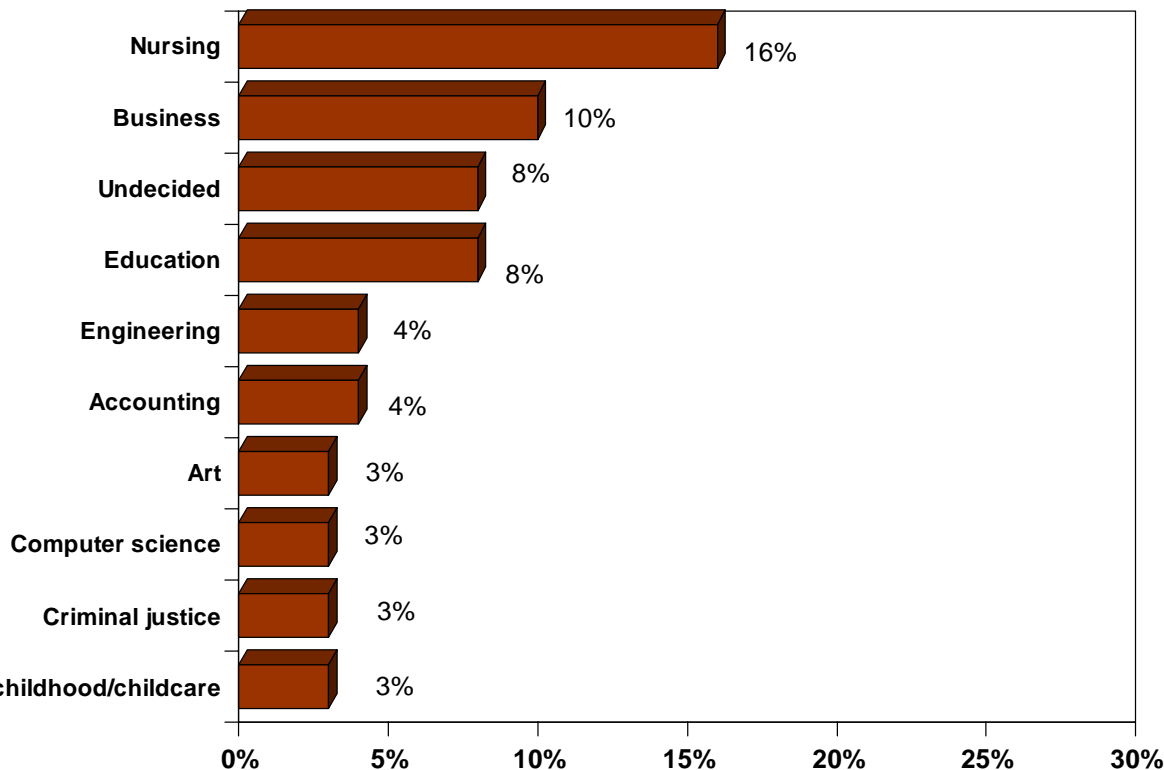
- Three segments emerged as being more receptive to continuing their education:
  - Black and Hispanic adults—though the sample size must be considered
  - Those that entered college within the last 10 years and that are currently working a white-collar profession
  - Unmarried individuals with 85 or more total credit hours



# Top Majors of Interest

(Top 10)

If you were to attend college, what would you be most interested in studying?



- Among students likely to re-enroll in the near future, top programs of interest include nursing, business, and education.



# Barriers

- The greatest barriers to re-entry are time and money
- Additional expected deterrents did not arise as major concerns
  - Not concerned about being able to fit in at college or do well
  - Access is not a barrier either. Even if it was, more than two-thirds of respondents indicated they would consider online education





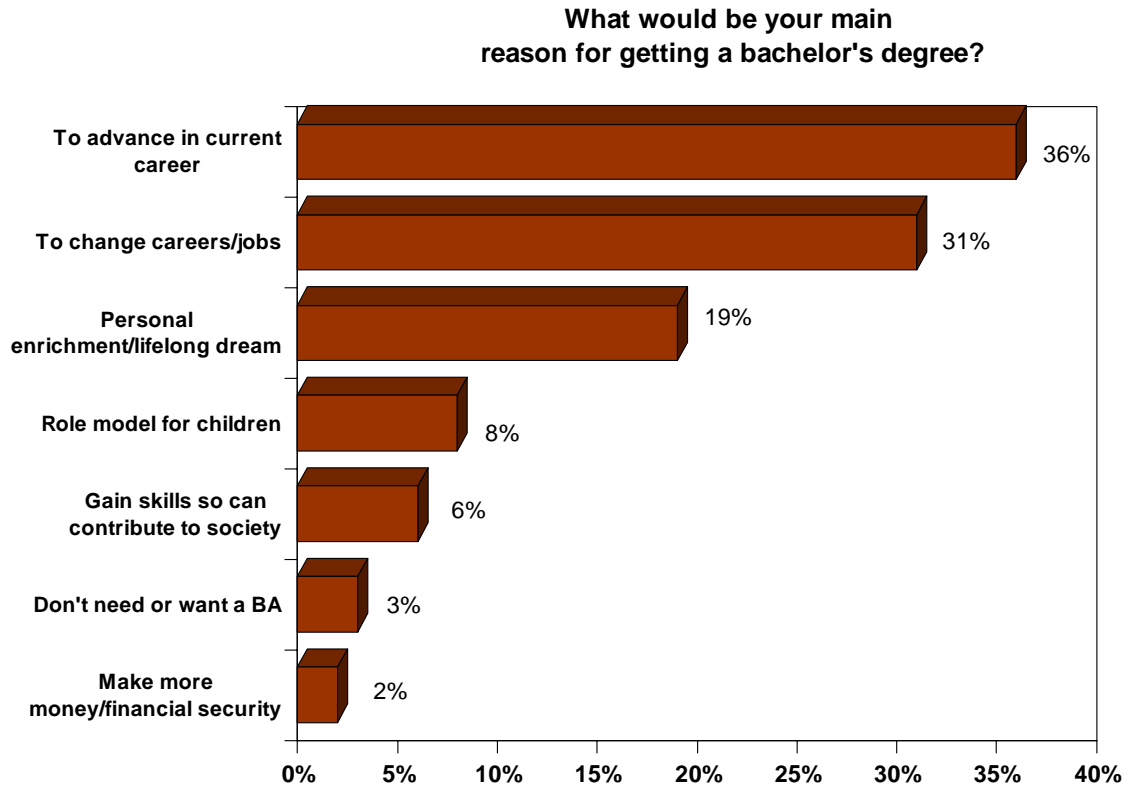
# Motivators

- More than 40% of respondents feel no external pressure to eventually complete a bachelor's degree
  - Consider targeting communication to Kentucky employers. If the drive is not intrinsic to a prospective student or within their family, perhaps the added weight of a colleague, supervisor, or mentor could help create a sense of urgency among potential returners



# Reasons for Getting a Bachelor's Degree

*(Top 7 – Open-ended Responses)*



- For the most part, the primary reason to return would be to enhance career opportunities. Note that “more money” is specifically mentioned by very few respondents. Career advancement/change is a more relevant notion
- With nearly one-third of adults looking for a career change, specifically promote the tools available at [GoHigherKy.org](http://GoHigherKy.org) that assist adults in selecting a career that matches their interests and values
- This includes ensuring that the GHK career section meets the needs of adult learners

# Key Messages

- **You've done it before—you can do it again**
  - Most had solid academic standing in their first college experience
- **A bachelor's degree can dramatically increase your potential for higher income and career advancement**
- **You need a change**
  - 31% say the main reason for getting a bachelor's degree is to change their career/job
- **Completing that degree is not as expensive as you think**
  - Many overestimate, particularly of public education
- **Continuing your degree will “make me feel better about myself”**
  - Two-thirds somewhat or strongly agree with this statement
- **Time management—home, work, and school—is possible and here's how these people have done it (and how you can too)**



# Most Used Mediums

- General Web search for college-related sites
  - Search engine marketing is an essential consideration (40% would first go to the Web to gather information about college)
  - Looking for programs/majors and requirements, class schedules, and financial aid options
  - 91% of adult potential returners have Internet access (67% are online daily)
- Direct contact to an institution (phone, Web, e-mail, etc.)
- Visit specific college and university Web sites



# Most Requested Services and Offerings

- Receiving college credit for work experience
- Accelerated degree programs
- Financial aid programs specifically for adult part-time students
- Online learning programs



# Verbatim Comments

- *“Find ways to help students who already owe money to continue their education”*
- *“It’s harder to go back once you’ve dropped out”*
- *“The biggest concern for me is the financial aspect; they need more scholarships for the non-traditional student”*
- *“More financial aid for non-traditional students, look to see what the finances really are in the household”*
- *“Personal communication. Provide career/course placement so I don’t have to take classes that I’ve already taken or don’t need which is a waste of time and money”*
- *“Special grants or scholarships for non-traditional students and more open information about them”*
- *“I’m very happy in my life without a bachelor’s degree”*
- *“Needs to be more availability of programs for every schedule”*
- *“It would have been easier with additional help when I was younger, it’s too late now”*



# Thank You



# About Stamats

We are an award-winning, nationally recognized higher education research, planning, and marketing communications company. Our mission is to help college and university leaders achieve their most important marketing, recruiting, and fundraising goals through the creation of customized integrated marketing solutions.

## Research, Planning, and Consulting Services

- Image and competitive positioning studies
- Tuition price elasticity studies
- Alumni and donor studies
- Marketing communication audits
- Recruiting audits
- Campus visit audits
- Integrated marketing plans
- Brand clarification and communication plans
- Recruiting plans
- Strategy development and strategic plans
- Board presentations
- Project-specific consulting

## Creative Services

- Recruiting and fundraising publications
- Web site development
- Virtual tours
- Direct marketing strategies (search, annual fund)
- Targeted e-mail marketing systems
- Advertising
- Creative concepting
- Content management systems
- Dynamic news and events calendars
- Message boards/chats

- **Offices:** Richmond, San Francisco, and Cedar Rapids

